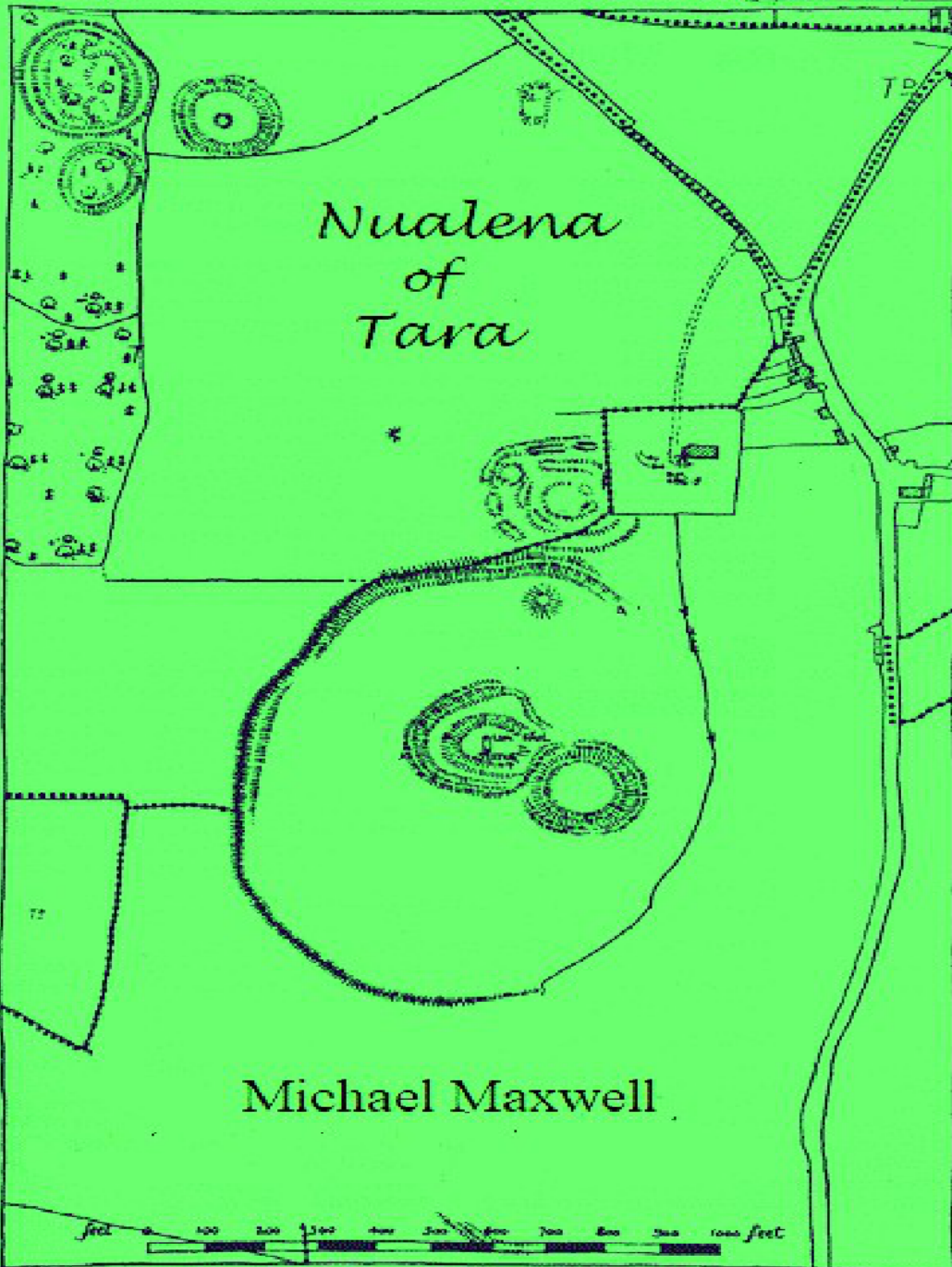


Nualena of Tara

Michael Maxwell

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NUALENA

of
TARA

by

Michael Maxwell (pseud)

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This short story is a work of fiction and entirely a product of the author's imagination. Any references to persons, other than historical figures, are fictitious and purely coincidental. Although the story includes references to the history of Tara, Meath, Ireland and the theories of Carl Jung, some of the information about the two subjects may be incorrect, and readers are encouraged to do their own research should they wish to learn more about them. The book cover is an edited copy of P.W. Joyce's map of Tara in *The Story of Ancient Irish Civilization, London: Longmans, Green, 1907.*

To Nualena

'Come live with me and be my muse...'

Michael

Sean sat on a hill overlooking Tara. His original plan had been to fly directly from Chicago to Prestwick, Scotland and give a lecture in Edinburgh on the topic ‘Quantum Entanglement – or Spooky Action at a Distance’. But, at the last moment, he decided to first visit Ireland, the home of his ancestors as he had once promised his now dead grandfather.

The revised plan was to fly to Dublin where his grandfather had lived as a young man; visit some of his grandfather’s old haunts; rent an automobile; drive north to Tara, the birthplace of the O’Neills; spend a few days there taking in the sights, then motor on up the east coast of Ireland to Larne; drop off the rented automobile; take the ferry across the Irish Sea to Stranraer, Scotland and catch a bus to Edinburgh University where he would deliver his lecture. After the lecture he would fly from Prestwick, Scotland to Chicago the following day.

As planned, he had left O’Hare International Airport, in Chicago, on Aer Lingus at 11:55 a.m., on September 14 and landed at Dublin Airport at 2:00 a.m. the following morning, Dublin time. Tired by his long trip he had taken a bus shuttle to and checked into the nearby Malden Hotel.

The same morning, he had awakened late as a result of his long flight of almost eight hours and jet-lag due to the difference in time zones. But as he had promised his grandfather, he had visited the tenement building in which his grandfather had lived, the local pub that his grandfather had visited often and some of the other places that his grandfather had mentioned. He hadn’t booked a room at Tara yet, but felt confident that he would find accommodation when he got there.

Renting an automobile at the Dublin airport, in the late afternoon of the same day, Sean had followed the roadmap provided for him by the car rental company and driven slowly west and then north via the N3, M50 and M3 highways, being careful to stay in the left lane of each as required by Irish law. It took him an hour instead of the usual forty minutes.

Arriving at Tara in the late afternoon, he had checked into a local ‘Bed and Breakfast’ within walking distance of the archeological ruins of Tara, unpacked, and strolled nonchalantly over to the nearby building from which tours of Tara were arranged and to which he had been directed by a sign as he had driven past it to get to the B&B. The parking lot of the tour-guide building had been empty, the door to the building had been locked and a sign in the window of the door had said ‘Closed For The Season’.

“Shit!” Sean had cursed angrily aloud, but grudgingly admitted to himself ruefully, *It’s my own bloody fault! I should have planned this part of my trip*

better, instead of deciding at the last minute to include a visit to Ireland as part of my trip to Scotland. He consoled himself. Well, I might as well look around a bit while I'm here. Tomorrow I might be able to find someone to tell me what the hell this place is all about. He now sat on a hill on Tara in the growing dusk looking helplessly at the landscape around him.

“Hello,” a voice said from behind Sean. Startled out of his reverie, he twisted his body around to see a young woman standing behind him. He hadn’t seen her approach the mound on which he was sitting so she must have come from a direction behind him. She stood before him her arms outstretched before her as if to welcome him to Tara. In spite of her simple looking appearance, Sean felt immediately attracted to her. Although her tall slender body was covered by a long maroon-colored simple woolen robe, he sensed that a beautiful, lithe body lay beneath it. Her pleasant looking face was devoid of any lipstick but the natural colour of her ruddy cheeks compensated for a lack of make-up and gave the impression of virginal innocence. But her light-green coloured eyes flashed with a vivacity which implied a fiery passion when emotionally aroused. A head of long flowing red hair, characteristic of Celt women framed her face, cascaded over her shoulders and down the back of the simple robe that she wore.

“You startled me!” Sean exclaimed.

“Sorry about that!” the young woman apologized and stood uncertain what to say or do next.

Sensing her embarrassment, Sean responded the only way he could think of at the moment. “Won't you join me?”

“Thank you,” the young woman responded and sat down beside him, drawing her bare legs up beneath her warm robe so that only her leather sandals showed, wrapped her arms around her legs and looked silently in the same direction as Sean. He took the opportunity to glance sideways at her and confirmed that she was definitely attractive.

What the hell is a beautiful young woman like her doing out here all alone at night in the middle of nowhere when she should be with a husband or fiancé? Sean wondered. But he noticed that she wore no ring on the third finger of her left hand. The young woman continued to sit silently beside him, made no attempt to initiate a conversation and appeared to be lost in thought.

Not sure what to say or do next, Sean attempted to initiate a conversation. “My name is Sean. What's yours?”

Turning her head toward him, the young woman said in the beautiful musical voice of a young Irish colleen, “My name is Nualena,” and continued staring at the landscape in front of her.

“That's a pretty name. Do you live around here?”

“Yes,” Nualena said and pointed in the direction of a farmhouse in the distance behind them.

“Come here much?” Sean asked in a further attempt to initiate a conversation.

“Every night. But I haven't seen you here before. You're American, aren't you?”

“No, you haven't seen me here before and yes, I'm American. My grandfather once told me that our ancestors came from this area and said that we were descendants of one of the kings of Tara. I told him that someday, together we would visit Dublin and Tara. When he died unexpectedly, I decided to visit Ireland as soon as I could to honor him and at the same time perhaps find out a bit about my Irish heritage. I'm presenting a paper at a conference in Edinburgh in a few days so decided to visit Dublin and Tara on the way there. I've visited Dublin, but when I got here, I discovered that the tour office was closed for the season so thought that I might as well wander about the site and see what I could find out, although I don't know a darn bit about what I am looking at. I suppose that I could take a few pictures with my camera tomorrow and try to find more about what the pictures represent when I get back to the States.”

“What's your last name?”

“O'Neill.”

“Then your grandfather is correct. This area in Ireland is the origin of the O'Neills. And yes, if your last name is O'Neill, then you are descended from one of the kings of Tara.”

“Oh? How do you know that?” Sean asked a bit skeptically.

“I know that because I've lived here all my life and probably know everything that there is to know about Tara. For example, the English word Tara comes from the old Celtic word *Temris* which means 'sacred space'. The other Gaelic translations *Cnoc na Teamhrach* or 'Hill of Tara' and *Teamhair na Rí* or 'Tara of the Kings' are also used to identify this area. The very mound on which we are now sitting is called the 'Mound of the Hostages' or *Dumha nan Giall*, in my language, and is the oldest visible monument among all the features you see around us. It covers a passage tomb consisting of a number of upright stones covered by two very large flat stones covered by earth. The mound was built around 3,000 B.C. It got the name 'Mound of the Hostages' during medieval times because it was believed that in the past it was the place where the exchange of hostages of warring *clanna* took place.”

Sean was impressed! *She seems to know a lot about Tara. With no tour guides available, maybe I can hire her to show me around. She probably could use the extra money.* He cleared his throat. “You really seem to know a lot about Tara. I have an idea. Because the tour-guide office is closed for the season, how about me hiring you to show me around Tara and explaining to me what all these mounds and circles are about?”, gesturing at the scattered abundance of them around them.

“We can talk about that tomorrow. I’ll meet you here at the ‘Mound of Hostages’ tomorrow in the late afternoon.” Looking at the moon that was beginning to rise, Nualena said, “But I’ve got to go now.”

“What about tomorrow morning?”

“I can’t. But I’ll see you here tomorrow, early evening!” she shouted over her shoulder as she hurried off in the direction from which she had come.

Chapter 3

Sean spent the next day wandering around the village near Tara, visiting the local gift shop and cafe in the morning and in the early afternoon practicing the speech that he was going to give in Edinburgh in a few days. He arrived at the 'Mound of the Hostages', in the late afternoon, sat down and waited patiently for Nualena to appear. A few minutes later, he watched her approach him from the same direction from which she had come the last time.

God, she's even more beautiful than the first time that I saw her! Sean thought, as he watched Nualena stride through the fields toward him. He hadn't been able to see her features clearly the previous night in the gloaming. But in the full light of the late afternoon sun that now shone fully on her, he saw a more vivid picture of her. She was dressed again in the same simple maroon-colored woolen robe of an Irish peasant girl that she had worn the night before but looked taller and more stately than he had remembered. Her long red hair still streamed behind her in the slight breeze, as she strode toward him. She reminded him of a picture of an Irish warrior-princess that he once seen in a book.

As she approached him with a smile, Sean saw that her eyes were a lighter green than he had remembered. Her face, flushed from the effort from walking quickly, made her even more alluring than she had been the night before. She still wore no lipstick, but her lips looked fuller and more inviting. When she opened her mouth to say hello, Sean saw two rows of beautiful white teeth. At that moment, he felt overcome by a strange feeling that he had somehow known her intimately before but held back an inexplicable urge to take her in his arms, kiss her passionately and tell her that he loved her. Although he had dated a few young women while attending Notre Dame, he had never felt this way about a woman before. He thought *So, this is what falling in love is like!* He got up to greet her as Nualena approached him.

"Hello again," Nualena said as she reached out, confidently took Sean's hand and squeezed it gently. Sean thought that she held it a bit longer than necessary. He thought. *I wonder if she's hitting on me? Don't be ridiculous! You've just met her! Besides, with her looks, she's probably already engaged or married or at least has a boyfriend.* But, as before, Nualena wore no wedding or engagement band on the third finger on her left hand. The only jewelry that she wore was a silver brooch in the shape of a Celtic harp on the breast of her maroon robe.

Sean blushed. "Hi Nualena. Good to see you again. Well, have you decided to help me understand all this stuff?" he said, as he waved his hand at all the earthen structures in front of them.

“Yes Sean, I would like that very much. We can discuss what you owe me when we have completed the tour. But, let’s get started before it gets too dark.”

“Okay. I’m all yours,” Sean replied and wished that he was! He was definitely in love.

Nualena's voice took on the tone of a tour-guide. “Well, to begin Sean, it’s difficult to think of Tara as it was in the very beginning, because it took thousands of years to create what you see all around you,” gesturing with her right hand. “But think of a hill about eight hundred and thirty feet high, three-quarters of a mile wide and one and one quarter mile long, running north and south. Now close your eyes and imagine the hill and everything around it being nothing but trees as far as the eye can see. That would be the ‘Hill of Tara’ during prehistoric times.” Sean closed his eyes and tried to picture it.

“Now, open your eyes,” Nualena commanded. Sean opened his eyes.

“Now, look at all the earthen structures around you.” Sean rotated his body looking at the earthen structures surrounding them. “Not all of the structures represented by these earthen mounds that you see were built at the same time. They were built systematically over thousands of years. In Neolithic times, the population in this area wasn’t very large and there wasn’t much competition for food and shelter. But as the population grew, people who lived in this area began to inhabit the hill and use it for defense purposes. The mound that we are now standing on was built by about 3200 B.C. and is now called, as I said before, ‘Mound of the Hostages’. But the mound is misnamed because it was only during the mediaeval period of history in Ireland that it was associated with the exchange of hostages. It is the oldest visible monument on the Hill of Tara. Initially, it was the communal grave of a single community and held the cremated remains of about 300 people. By about 2200 B.C. during the Bronze Age, because of lack of space, there had been only an additional 33 burials there in the passageway and then in the mound itself. After that, only very important people, such as local chieftains, were buried there. The now barred entrance-way that you see below us was closely aligned with the sun around the winter solstice or *Samhain* and with the spring solstice or *Imboic*, in order to know when to celebrate the beginning of the different seasons. During the Neolithic or early Bronze Age, there was a huge double 250 meter-wide circle of upright timbers built surrounding the top of the hill including the ‘Mound of the Hostages’.

“Probably for defense purposes,” Sean suggested.

“No, they were too wide apart for that. They were used for ceremonial purposes.” Nualena continued. “There were also at least six smaller burial

mounds also built in an arc around that timber circle. Four of them are known as *Dall*, *Dorcha*, *Dumha na Ban-Amhus* or 'Mound of the Mercenary Women' and *Duma na mBó* or 'Mound of the Cow'. The timber circle has since disappeared and the burial mounds are barely visible today. Looking south from where we are, you will see that we are at the north end of what was a very large enclosure. This enclosure is called *Rath na Rioch* or 'Enclosure of the Kings'. It's about 1,043 feet long from north to south, 866 feet east to west and has a circumference of 3,300 feet consisting of a ditch with an outer bank. There was a stake-wall inside the ditch which was used for defense. It was built about 100 B.C." Pointing to the center of the 'Enclosure of the Kings', in which they were, Nualena said. "South of us, you will see two large adjoining enclosures." Sean followed the direction of her gesture with his eyes. "The round double-ditched enclosure that you see to your right inside our larger enclosure is called *Teach Chormac* or 'Cormac's House' and the one to your left is called *Forradi* or 'Royal Seat'. Both enclosures were built on top of earlier burial mounds about 100 B.C. If you look carefully, you will see inside the enclosure called 'Cormac's House' a tall free-standing stone called *La Fail* or 'Stone of Destiny' in front of which Tara kings were crowned. Because it relates directly to your ancestry, I'll take you to see it up close and explain its significance tomorrow evening. Further south, beyond the 'Enclosure of the Kings' and at the southern edge of the hill is *Rath Laoghaire* or 'Laoghaire's Fort' where King Laoghaire is buried. He was one of the kings of Tara. He was also a son of Niall of the Nine Hostages which I will also tell you about tomorrow evening when we visit the 'Stone of Destiny'. Laoghaire died in 458 A.D. and was buried standing upright dressed in his armor. Half a mile south beyond Laoghaire's Fort is another large circular enclosure known as *Rath Meave*, but you cannot see it from here. It was constructed sometime between 2000 and 1500 B.C. It is named in honor of the legendary figure *Medb Lethderg* who is considered to be the sovereignty goddess of Tara because legend states that she was the wife or lover of nine successive chieftains or kings of Tara. Now, turn around and look north." Sean did so. "What you see directly in front of you on just the other side of the remains of the ditch surrounding the 'King's Enclosure', which we are in, is a round enclosure with four concentric rings of ditches and banks including earlier burial mounds called *Rath na Seanadh* or 'Enclosures of the Synods'. That configuration has changed many times and once had a large timber building inside it. It was occupied between the First Century and 300 A.D.. Roman artifacts have also been found there. Do you see the stone building to the east of the 'Enclosure of the Synods'?"

"Yes. That's the 'Visitor Centre' that I tried to visit when I got here, but it was closed for the season."

"Well, that's an 1822 reconstruction of Saint Patrick's Church which was

originally built there about 1190 A.D. Just to the right of the church, on the side of the hill, are some upright stones which were part of Saint Patrick's churchyard. Looking north again, you will see what appears to be the remains of an avenue leading to the hilltop and is called *Teach Miodhchuarta* or 'Banqueting Hall'. It was one of the last monuments built and was a ceremonial avenue leading to the hilltop for the coronation of Tara's kings. Finally, at the far northwestern edge of the hill is *Ráth Gráinne* or 'Gráinne's Enclosure' and two *Claonfhearta* or 'Sloping Graves' because they are on the side of the hill. In total, the remains of twenty ancient monuments are visible and there are another sixty buried that you can't see. Well, that's enough for one night. As I said earlier, I'll tell you about your ancestry tomorrow night."

Sean was overwhelmed by Nualena's extraordinary knowledge of Tara. She had recited it all as if from a tour-guide book. "Wow, Nualena! How the heck do you know all those things about Tara and how do you even know that another sixty buried structures exist if one can't see them?"

"I don't know," said Nualena. "I just know."

"Were you ever a tour guide here?"

"No."

"Then you must have read about all this stuff somewhere."

"No I haven't. I would remember that if I had."

"But there must be a reason for you knowing as much as you do about Tara."

"Well, I have lived here all my life," Nualena said defensively. "And I've been told, so have my ancestors. Maybe someone told me all this stuff when I was very young and I had forgotten all of it until now."

"If that's the case, then you must have a photographic memory."

"Maybe. I don't know. I just know what I know."

"Well, whatever the reason is for you knowing so much about Tara, I just want to say that I've been very fortunate to have you as my tour guide, if only by accident. Without you, I would have had no idea about all this stuff. How much do I owe you for the tour? It was great!"

"I do have two more stories to tell that I think you might be interested in. As I said, it's about your ancestry. I'll tell them to you tomorrow evening. You can pay me then. Well, I must go now," Nualena said abruptly and got up to

leave.

Now definitely attracted to Nualena, Sean wanted to know more about her.
“It’s getting dark. May I walk you home?”

“No!” Nualena paled visibly and began walking away quickly in the direction from which she had originally come.

“Wait, I don’t know where you live! What if I need to see you before tomorrow evening?” Sean yelled after her.

“I live at Tara. I’ll meet you here again tomorrow late-afternoon,” Nualena said as she hurried through the gloaming in the direction of the farmhouse in the distance.

Chapter 4

Sean sat on the 'Mound of the Hostages' waiting impatiently for Nualena to come. He had paced around idly all day, visiting the same shops that he had the previous day and had again gone over the same notes of his lecture so often that by now, he had them memorized. It wasn't that he wanted to hear more about Tara, he admitted to himself, as much as just wanting to see Nualena again. *Damn it! What's wrong with me? I've known her for only two nights and I'm already in love with her!*, but heaved a sigh of relief when he saw Nualena approaching him in the distance. When she arrived, she bounded up the 'Mound of the Hostages' like the wild young hart that he had seen in the area the previous day, smiled at him and plopped down beside him. She was still attired as before.

"Why so sad looking?" Nualena said.

"I was worried that you wouldn't come."

"I said that I would, didn't I?"

"Well, yes, but I was anxious to learn more about my ancestry," Sean lied, "and I was afraid that you might have had other commitments that might interfere with our meeting. You did hurry away last night."

"Oh, that? It's just that I must return to where I live before a certain time each evening, or else it may complicate things. But let me tell you about your Irish ancestry before I must go again. Last night, I described to you the physical features of the Hill of Tara but just mentioned your ancestors and *La Fail* or 'Stone of Destiny' in passing. Tonight, I want to show you the 'Stone of Destiny' up close and tell you about 'Niall of the Nine Hostages' because they both are a part of your heritage."

Nualena stood up, reached out and grasped Sean by the hand who also got up. A tingle of electricity surged through his body. Still holding his hand, Nualena led him down the hill toward one of the two adjoining circle inside of what Nualena had referred to as 'The Royal Enclosure'. Within the circle to the right that she had identified as 'Cormac's House' was a tall free-standing stone about six feet high and about two feet wide in the shape of a phallus.

Releasing Sean's hand and pointing to the stone, Nualena, blushed because of the sexual implications of its shape and said, "As I told you last night, this stone is called *Lai Fail* or the 'Stone of Destiny'. Because of its historic importance, there are all kinds of legends associated with its origin. It's limestone and not from this area so it must have been imported from

somewhere else. As a result, there are many stories about how the stone got here but the most common one is that it arrived at the port of Carrick Fergus about 580 B.C. in a ship belonging to the Iberian *Danaan* people. On board the ship was *Eochaidh*, son of a High King, *Princess Tea Tephi* and the scribe *Simon Brauch*. Princess Tea also had in her possession an ancient harp, believed to have come from the House of David in Israel. The three of them then had the stone transported to the Hill of Tara. All this, of course, is incorrect. The truth is that the stone is prehistoric and dates to about 3200 B.C. and originally lay at the base of the 'Mound of the Hostages' as part of a fertility ritual. It was only thousands of years later when Tara became the home of local kings that it was moved from its original place to this location and named the 'Stone of Destiny' or *Lai Fail*. The stone was believed to have magical powers and became part of the ritual of creating local kings and it was said that when a rightful candidate for kingship touched it, it emitted a loud roaring noise and transferred to the rightful king good health and a long life."

"Place the palm of your hand on the stone, Sean."

"Why?"

"Just place the palm of your hand on the stone." Sean placed the palm of his hand on the stone. It was warm to the touch. He also thought that he felt a bit of vibration.

"What did you feel?"

"I felt a bit of warmth and a bit of a vibration," Sean answered honestly. Nualena nodded her head in agreement.

"Put your ear to the stone and listen, Sean," Nualena commanded. Sean put his ear to the stone and listened.

"What did the stone say to you Sean?"

"It didn't say anything. But I did hear as very slight roaring noise."

Nualena looked very serious and said, "See, I told you that you are a descendant of the one of the kings of Ireland."

Sean thought *She knows damned well that it was the all-day heat of the sun that made the stone feel warm and that its just my blood pressure pounding in my trapped ear making the roaring noise as it would if I were listening to a conch shell. I wonder if she really believes what she just told me?*

Nualena continued her lecture. “I’ve already described to you the physical development of Tara. During the same period of time, there were thousands of different clan leaders or *taoiseachs* who ruled over the Tara area. Eventually, the title of the clan leader who controlled Tara at the time, became known as ‘King of Tara’ and sometimes ‘King of Ireland’, which is a misleading term because all of the early so-called kings of Tara were not kings of the whole island of Ireland.”

“Hey, I’ll settle for my ancestor being just a local king,” Sean quipped.

Nualena laughed and smiled affectionately at Sean. “Okay, King Sean. To continue then, by the Fifth Century A.D., a clan called the *Laigin* were in control of Tara but were defeated by another clan led by their chieftain, *Niall Noígíallach* or ‘Niall of the Nine Hostages’. He was born about 350 A.D. and reigned as King of Tara in the late fourth and early fifth century. He made Tara the ceremonial seat of his leadership and ruled from there. His method for maintaining control over potential enemies was to take hostages from the family of neighboring clans and lesser kings as a guarantee against being attacked by ambitious rivals. Sometimes these hostages remained hostages for years. The burial mound you were sitting on when I first met you, as I said before, is where the hostages were exchanged and came to be called ‘The Mound of the Hostages’. Niall also led successful raids against Roman Britain and Scotland and conquered much of Ulster. He died about 400 A.D. But he had seven brothers and twelve sons. After his death, one of his sons, Laedhaire, who I have already mentioned, became the High King of Tara. He and his descendants continued to control much of Ireland for most of the next six hundred years. All but two of the High Kings of Tara came from this family. Laedhaire was the ancestor of the *Uí Néill* dynasties that dominated the rest of Ireland from the 6th to the 10th centuries. By the eighth century, the *Ui Néills* held power in the north-west, where they were known as the ‘Northern Ui Néill’ and also in the Midlands, where they were known as the ‘Southern Ui Néill’. The kingship of Tara then alternated between the Southern and Northern Uí Néill until the eleventh century. After this, control of Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford became more important than control of Tara and the Ui Neill kingships came to an end. The Irish surname *O’Neill* means ‘of Niall’ and all O’Neills are descendants of Niall Noígíallach and therefore you are truly a descendent of one of the kings of Tara if not Ireland.

Again, overwhelmed by Nualena's knowledge of Tara, Sean challenged her. “Are you sure about all of this?”

“Of course I am,” Nualena replied indignantly.

“But how do you know all this stuff?” Sean insisted on knowing.

“I told you before that I just know,” Nualena replied with a bit of exasperation in her voice.

In an attempt to appease her, Sean said, “I’m sorry for questioning your knowledge about Tara. I never really believed that I’m a descendant of an Irish king until now. Thank you for telling me. I guess that means I’m kind of special, after all.”

Nualena again looked affectionately at Sean and thought, *You are to me, Sean, you are to me!* but laughed and said. “Not really Sean. It’s estimated that there are as many as three million men living today who are direct descendants of ‘Niall of the Nine Hostages’.

“What? Why so many?” Sean sounded disappointed.

“Well, the fact that he had so many brothers and sons as well as the fact he kept as many hostages as he did on a regular basis during his reign and the fact that most of these hostages were usually women may have had something to do with it,” Nualena said and blushed again at the sexual innuendo. “Well, I think that I have covered everything that I can think of about Tara and your ancestors,” she said and hesitated as if waiting to be paid.

Sean also hesitated. He had just met Nualena two nights before but he knew that he was definitely in love with her. Although he had dated a few other women at university, he had never felt the same way about any of them as he did for Nualena. There was something about her that was uniquely different. Maybe it was her beauty. It may have been her beautiful almost musical Irish accent whenever she spoke. Or maybe the air of friendliness with which she always greeted him and talked easily to him as she guided him around Tara. *I don’t know why I love her, but ‘damn it’ I do and I must tell her so, even if she laughs in my face. I must see her one more time to tell her.*

Thinking quickly, Sean blurted out. “That was a great tour that you gave me of Tara and my ancestry, Nualena. I honestly don’t know how you know all this information! But I would like to ask you some more about my O’Neill ancestors, if you have some time tomorrow evening. But if you cannot,” he said apprehensively, “then how much do I owe you for your great tours of the last two nights.”

Looking at her wristwatch Nualena said, “We’ll talk about that tomorrow evening when I see you. I’ll meet you on the ‘Hill of Hostages’ at 7:00 p.m.” She suddenly leaned over and kissed Sean on the cheek and then hurried off in the direction of the far-off farmhouse. He stood speechless, stunned by her show of affection and raised his hand to his cheek as if to capture her kiss.

Chapter 5

The following evening, Sean waited nervously for Nualena to meet him at the 'Mound of the Hostages'. He kept asking himself the question *How does a man tell a woman that he loves her?* He had never had the need to do so in the past because he had never been in love before. He wished that his grandfather was still alive, so that could ask him what to say and do.

Nualena was already late and Sean found himself almost hoping that she wouldn't come because of the embarrassing situation that would be sure to occur for both of them when he told her that he loved her. But '*Damn it!*', he was determined to go through with his profession of love for her if she came. He waited.

Toward dusk, Sean saw Nualena walking quickly from the direction of the farmhouse in the distance. He heaved a sigh of relief mixed with apprehension, stood up to greet Nualena, took a deep breath and whispered to himself mentally, *Now for the embarrassing part!*

When Nualena saw Sean waiting for her, she waved to him and quickened her pace, smiled shyly when she met him and said "I'm sorry that I'm late. I was afraid that you wouldn't be here."

"No problem," Sean responded but felt like saying, *For you I would wait forever!* But instead, he gathered up his courage, took a deep breath and said, "Thanks for coming Nualena, but I have a confession to make. Last night, when I asked you to meet me here again to-night I didn't want to find out more about my ancestors, I just wanted to see you again. I'm leaving in two days and there is something that I wanted to say to you before I go."

"What is it, Sean?"

Sean hung his head in shy embarrassment.

Nualena began to say something, but Sean put up his hand as if to stop her and blurted out while he still had enough courage. "What I want to say is that I love you."

Nualena began to say something again. Sean again put up his hand to stop her and said "I know, I know, I've only known you for three days but I love you. I don't know why. Maybe it's as a result of the emotional feelings for this place that you have created in me. I don't know if you are engaged or married and it would be wrong to tell you all this under those circumstances but I had to tell you how I feel about you before I leave for Edinburgh. Please forgive me for

embarrassing you.”

“There is nothing to forgive and I’m not embarrassed, Sean. I’m glad you told me because, you see, I love you too.”

Sean was flabbergasted. “What? But Nualena you hardly know me!”

Nualena smiled. “But you hardly know me too, Sean.”

Sean protested “But you are so beautiful! The first time that I saw you I noticed that you weren't wearing any rings. But you must at least have a boyfriend.”

“No Sean, no boyfriends. But I must tell you that I have been promised to be married to someone by my father.”

Sean’s shoulders sagged in disappointment. “But you just said that you loved me.”

“I did and I do. But it’s a long story.”

“Please tell me about it, Nualena. Maybe I can help.”

She explained. “My father is a tenant farmer, which means that he rents a farmhouse and farmland from a landlord who owns the land that my father farms. Because of the relatively poor farming conditions in the area in which we live, my father hasn’t been able to pay his rent fully for the last ten years. Over time, the accumulated amount of rent that he owes his landlord has kept growing and now he owes the landlord a lot of money. Recently, my father agreed with his landlord to marry me to his son when I reach the age of twenty-one in return for all of my father’s debts being forgiven. I’m twenty years old now. The son is a fat, ugly, cruel, selfish man much older than I am, who I could never love. He cannot touch me until we are married but I shudder to think of how he will treat me after we marry.” She shuddered visibly. “For the last six months, every night, after looking after my father's house during the day, I come here to sit on this hill, look at the stars and think about having to marry someone I don't love. I had decided that I would never marry the landlord’s son and would commit suicide before doing so. Then you came into my life. I’ve never loved any man before, but when I met you, I fell in love with you immediately. As you said, maybe it was a result of the emotional feelings that were aroused in each of us in such a romantic place, I know that we will never meet again because you will be going back to the United States and I will be married within a few months. But I believe that we were destined to meet each other as we did and were destined to love each other as we have. Hopefully, that will be enough for both of us.” Tears welled

in Nualena's eyes. "I know that it will always have been enough for me."

Sean said. "No, Nualena. It will never have been enough for me. My destiny is to love you and cherish you all the days of my life. How much does your father owe the landlord?"

"I don't know, Sean. About five thousand pounds, I guess."

"If that debt was paid off, then your father would owe the landlord nothing and you would not have to marry the landlord's son, correct?"

"Yes, I think so."

Sean took control of the situation. "Okay then, here's what's we are going to do. You are going to return home and pretend that nothing has happened. Try to find out how much your father owes the landlord and meet me here tomorrow night and tell me exactly how much he owes. After I finish my presentation in Edinburgh, I will fly home to the United States, borrow enough money to pay off your father's debt, return here with it immediately, pay off the landlord, marry you and take you back to the United States with me."

"I can't let you do that, Sean. It's too much money. I love you too much to let you do that," Nualena said and began crying softly.

"And I love you too much to not do it." Sean took Nualena into his arms, tilted her chin and kissed her gently on the lips.

Nualena had never kissed a man before but threw her arms around Sean's neck and kissed him back passionately. Drawing him down onto the grass, she pulled him down on top of her and whispered "I love you. You can make love to me if you want to, but I don't know what to do."

Sean kissed Nualena gently on the lips again. "It's okay. You don't have to do anything. I can wait until after we're married." He kissed her again and hugged her tightly, feeling the warmth of her body through the wool robe that she wore and smelling the fragrance of Irish wildflowers in her hair.

"Does that mean we're engaged?" Nualena asked shyly.

"For sure. Forever," Sean said kissing her gently on the forehead, eyes and lips.

Leaning away from Sean slightly, Nualena removed the harp shaped silver brooch that she wore on the breast of her robe and said, "In Ireland, engaged

people exchange a token of their love for each other. Please accept this brooch with which I pledge to you, my troth.” and gave it to him.

Sean took the brooch and pinned it to his sweater. He thought for a moment and then removed his university graduation ring from the baby finger of his right hand and placed it on the third finger of Nualena’s left hand. “With this ring, I also pledge to you my troth” he said.

As he did so, Nualena glanced at her wristwatch and said “I must go now”, got to her feet and brushed the grass from her clothing. I will see you tomorrow evening and tell you exactly how much my father owes” and kissed Sean gently on the lips before hurrying off to wherever she lived.

Chapter 6

The next evening, Sean sat on the 'Mound of the Hostages' happily waiting for Nualena to arrive. She would soon bring to him a record of how much money her father owed his landlord and they would spend the rest of their last evening together before he would leave for Edinburgh the next morning, give his lecture there, return to the United States, raise enough money as quickly as possible and immediately return to Ireland where he would pay off her father's debts and marry her.

By seven p.m., Nualena had not come and Sean began to look repeatedly in the direction from which she had come before. He decided that if Nualena did not come by 8:00 p.m., then he would go to the farmhouse in the distance from which she must have come, to get her.

By 8:15 p.m., Nualena had still not come and Sean walked quickly toward the now lit farmhouse in the distance hoping to get there before dark. Approaching the building and opening the squeaky gate, he heard a dog bark, saw an outside light go on and the silhouette of an old man standing in the doorway of the house with a leashed dog in one hand and a shotgun grasped in the other. "*Fan! Suigh!*" (Stay! Sit down!). The dog sat down. "Who be there?" the voice asked menacingly in a deep Irish brough and brandished the shotgun.

"It's Sh...Sh...Sean O'Neill," Sean stuttered nervously watching both the dog and the shotgun warily. *It must be Nualena's father.* "I'm a friend of Nualena's. May I speak to her, please."

"There be no Nualena here," the voice said gruffly. "Be off with ye before I sic my dog on ye."

"Please sir," Sean begged. "I met a young girl a few nights ago at Tara by the name of Nualena and I'm trying to find her. We've met at the 'Mound of the Hostages' for the last four evenings and she's told me a lot about Tara. Each time that she came, she came from this direction."

"There be no Nualena here. Describe her."

Sean described Nualena.

"There be no *cailin* around here who looks like that. She be a *leanhaun shee* maybe."

"A *leanhaun shee*?"

“You be a foreigner?”

“Yes. I’m American. But of Irish descent.”

“Then, ye must know about *banshees*, *leipreacháns* and *siogs*. But ye probably never heard of a *leanhaun shee*. A *leanhaun shee* be a beautiful fairy in woman form who lives in a fairy mound and ficks men. If ye fall in love with her first, ye will go insane. If she falls in love with ye first, ye will both live together happily ever after. She sounds like *leanne shee* to me!”

“She can’t be. She was too real.”

“All *banshee*, *leanne shee*, *leipreachans* and *siogs* be real. I’ve seen a *siog* meself!”

Sean saw the futility of continuing the conversation any longer. “Well, I’m sure that she’s not a *leanhaun shee*. But thank’s for your help anyway.”

“Sorry that meself could not be of more help,” the old man said sympathetically but shut the door quickly as if to ward off anything supernatural.

Well, he wasn’t much help, Sean said to himself as he walked away. Superstitious old fool! Damn it! I should have found out where Nualena lives. It’s too late to try to find out tonight, but first thing tomorrow I’ll visit some of the local shops when they open. Surely, someone will know her.

Early the next morning, Sean visited the few shops, cafes and B&Bs that existed in the surrounding area of Tara Hill. No one knew of a ‘Nualena’ or anyone who fit the description that he gave to them. But if he was not to be late for his lecture in Edinburgh, it was imperative that he leave for Edinburgh immediately. Reluctantly, he drove to Larne where he boarded the last ferry of the day for Stranraer.

Sean looked glumly out of the airplane window. He was on his way back to the United States after presenting his paper in Edinburgh. *I really screwed that up*, he said to himself ruefully. *It's bad enough that very few scientists understand much about quantum physics, let alone quantum entanglement, and I sure as hell didn't make it any easier for them with my presentation. Between getting to the conference late and just in time to present my paper and at the same time worrying about why Nualena did not come to me my last night at Tara, I think that I really confused the audience when I tried to go too quickly and introduced the mathematics of quantum entanglement too soon. I knew that when I quoted Richard Feynman saying that anyone who said they understood quantum mechanics didn't understand quantum mechanics, nobody laughed. My presentation was so bad that at that moment, I think that some of the audience, probably thought that I was one of the people that Richard Feynman was referring to.* Sean's suspicions of having made a poor presentation had been confirmed when there was only a smattering of applause at the end of his presentation and a milquetoast 'thank-you' by the moderator just before Sean left the stage in mute embarrassment. *Well, I might be able to salvage my reputation when I publish my paper in 'Quanta' next month*, Sean consoled himself with, as the plane landed in Chicago.

"Well, how did it go?" Professor Schmidt asked, as he met Sean in the lobby of the airport. He was there to pick up his star protégé. Initially, when applying to MIT, Sean had registered in the Physics undergraduate program. But when Professor Schmidt, Sean's professor, had seen his potential, he had taken him 'under his wing' and had guided him into the correct graduate programs in Physics.

Sean reddened with embarrassment. "Not too good," he confessed ruefully. "I guess I got entangled in my entanglement theory," he laughed in an attempt to make light of his recent fiasco.

Professor Schmidt tried to hide his disappointment. He had high hopes for Sean becoming another Richard Feynman. "Well, don't worry about it, Sean. After all, it's your first presentation at an international conference and the theory of quantum entanglement is a theory difficult to explain to anyone. I'm sure that you will do better next time." *I bloody-well hope so! Let's hope that the paper that you are going to publish next month will redeem our reputation here at MIT.*

Chapter 8

“Sean! It’s me, Nualena.”

Sean saw Nualena standing at the foot of his bed. She was dressed in a long white diaphanous gown. Her arms were outstretched toward him. “Why did you not come back to get me as you said you would?” she pleaded. “You said that you would. You know that I love you.”

“I am trying to, Nualena,” Sean replied. “When you didn’t come to the ‘Mound of the Hostages’ the last night I was at Tara, I went looking for you that night and the next morning but couldn’t find you. Why did you not come to the ‘Mound of the Hostages’ as you promised?”

Nualena said, “When I began questioning my father about how much money he owed the landlord, he wanted to know why I wanted to know. Thinking that he would understand, I told him that I had met you, that we had fallen in love and that you were going to return from the United States with the money to pay the landlord what my father owed him and marry me. My father laughed at me and said that I was very naive and that you just said that you loved me and would pay his debt to the landlord in order to seduce me the next time that we met. When I insisted that you were not like that and tried going to meet you, he said that he was not going to risk having his daughter’s marriage annulled because she was not a virgin and locked me in my room until after you had left Ireland. Since then, it is only a matter of a few months until I will be twenty-one years old and be forced to marry the landlord’s son, who I hate! Please come for me!”

“I will, I will Nualena! I’m trying to raise enough money as quickly as I can with which to pay the landlord. Please wait for me!”

“I will, I will, But hurry!” Nualena replied, upon which her image disappeared.

Sean awoke with a start! He had been having these identical recurring dreams every night for the last month. He had been trying to borrow money since returning to the United States, but without sufficient collateral was unable to borrow the estimated amount of over six thousand American dollars that Nualena’s father would need to pay his landlord. As a result, he couldn’t stop worrying about trying to raise enough money; he couldn’t sleep well, and as a result was always tired; he was losing weight and the situation was beginning to interfere with his research for which he was being paid.

Two Weeks Later

“How’s the paper coming, Sean?” asked Professor Schmidt referring to the paper that Sean was to publish in ‘Quanta’ by the end of the month.

“Okay, I guess.”

Professor Schmidt thought, *What do you mean by ‘Okay, I guess?’ The bloody paper should have been given to me a week ago for comments on improvement!* Sean didn’t look well. He no longer looked as ‘bright-eyed and bushy-tailed’ as he was before he went to Edinburgh. His usually well-combed hair was unkempt, he had dark bags under his eyes which were once bright, and he now looked perpetually tired. His face was poorly shaven. He walked with a slight stoop, suggesting an air of resignation. Professor Schmidt felt it necessary to intervene.

“Sean what’s wrong? You don’t look well.”

“I don’t know,” Sean lied. How could he tell Professor Schmidt about his meetings with Nualena, his recurring dream and his inability to raise enough money to return to Ireland. “I guess that I’m still a little bit depressed about how poorly I did in Edinburgh.”

“I told you not to worry about it,” Professor Schmidt said putting his arm around Sean’s shoulder, affectionately. But he added gently, “However, you’re no good to me the way you are. So, here’s what we are going to do. We are going to postpone you publishing your paper and I want you to see a doctor friend of mine.” Reluctantly, Sean agreed.

Chapter 9

Dr. Weisman arose from his desk as Sean entered his office. “Thanks for coming Sean. I’m Dr. Weisman,” he said and held out his hand. Sean shook it. “Please sit down.” Dr. Weisman gestured to the comfortable arm-chair across from his desk. Sean sat down.

Dr. Weisman continued. “You were referred to me by Professor Schmidt, the head of your department. He says that you seem to have a bit of trouble sleeping at night and its interfering with your research work during the day.”

“Yes.”

“What seems to be the problem?”

“As professor Schmidt said, I’m having trouble sleeping at night and it’s beginning to interfere with my research work.”

“And what research is that?”

“My subject of interest is Quantum Physics and specifically, I am interested in ‘quantum entanglement’ or as Albert Einstein referred to it ‘spooky action at a distance’.”

“Hmm...” Dr. Weisman raised his eyebrows. “Sounds interesting. Tell me more about it.”

“Well, in simplest terms, ‘quantum entanglement’ theory is a part of quantum physics that attempts to explain why two subatomic particles that are initially linked to each can, even if separated by billions of light-years apart, affect each other.”

Dr. Weisman responded. “Hmm...I can see why the phenomena is called ‘spooky action at a distance’. And I can see how trying to solve that conundrum can be really stressful.”

“Yes, even Richard Feynman, probably the smartest physicist in the world, says that nobody really understands quantum physics, which probably includes me.” Deciding to be frank with Dr. Weisman, Sean cleared his throat in embarrassment and said. “But that’s not the reason why I’m not sleeping well at night and having a hard time functioning during the day. I’m having a recurring dream that is causing it all.”

Dr. Weisman’s interest was immediately aroused. He had been trained in

Jungian psychoanalysis in which dreams play a major role in psychoanalyzing patients. He leaned forward. "That's interesting, Sean. Tell me about your dream."

"Well, while on my way to Scotland to present a paper on 'Quantum Entanglement' in Edinburgh, I decided to visit Ireland at the last minute, met a young Irish girl named Nualena while visiting Tara, the ancestral home of my O'Neill ancestors, fell in love with her and promised to return to Ireland as soon as possible to rescue her from an unwanted marriage. So far, I've been unable to do so and now she comes to me in the same dream every night and begs me to return to Ireland as quickly as possible to rescue and marry her."

"I see." said Dr. Weisman, stroking his chin. *Obviously, Sean is suffering from a sense of guilt, but I think there's more to his obvious neurosis than what he has just told me.* He turned on the tape-recorder that he kept on his desk. "Sean, with your permission, I'd like to ask you a few more questions but it is imperative that you be completely honest with me if I'm to help you. Whatever you tell me during any interviews that I have with you will be kept strictly confidential. Okay?"

"Sure. Ask me anything you want to."

"To begin with, where and when were you born?"

"I was born in 1942 in Chicago, Illinois."

"Tell me a bit about your family."

"My grandfather was from Ireland. My father was born in Chicago. I'm not sure where my mother was born."

"Why aren't you sure about your mother?"

"My mother deserted me and my father immediately after I was born. I never knew her name and my grandfather only spoke of her a couple of times. From what he told me, I don't think that she ever loved my father and that they had to get married when she became pregnant."

"What about your father? Did he ever tell you about your mother?"

"No. He was killed in an industrial accident shortly after my mother deserted us and I would have been too young to remember if he did."

"I guess you did not have any brothers or sisters."

“No, I didn’t. I was raised by my grandfather.”

“What about cousins?”

“No cousins. My father was an only child.”

“Grandmother?”

“No. she died before I was born.”

“So, you were raised solely by your grandfather? Tell me about him.”

“He’s dead now. But he once told me that he and our ancestors were from the Meath area of Ireland. He also told me that as a young man, he moved from Meath to Dublin to get a job. There, he said he joined the terrorist wing of the IRA but was forced to flee Ireland immediately following the bombing of a police constabulary in Belfast, for which he was suspected of participating as member of the IRA. He said that when he arrived in Chicago, he joined the local American chapter of ‘The Friends of Irish Freedom’. He said that with such a large population of Irish-Catholics living in Chicago, it wasn’t difficult to use his Irish-Catholic and *Sinn Fein* connections to climb the political ladder and become first, a ‘ward healer’ and eventually a ‘ward boss’ with all of the perks that went with the unofficial title -such as a job of building inspector for the city”

Dr. Weisman held up his hand and interrupted Sean. “Your grandfather must have played a pivotal role in your life as you grew up.”

“Yes, he did doctor. I’m not ashamed to say that after I was born, he devoted the rest of his life to raising me. In addition to feeding and clothing me, he made sure that I attended the best Catholic schools in Chicago. I don’t remember him ever punishing me. The only time that he ever laid his hands on me was when he taught me how to defend myself against the Protestant neighborhood bullies who used to call me a ‘Dogan’ or ‘bead-pusher’. But their attempt to bully me didn’t last for long,” he grinned.

Dr. Weisman who was Jewish, smiled also and remarked to himself *I know what you mean young man I know what you mean*. “It sounds as if your grandfather was a pretty wonderful guy.”

“Yes, he was. I guess his only fault was that when ‘in his cups’ he would annoy our neighbours in the middle of the night by singing at the top of his lungs as many Irish songs as he could remember. They usually began with him telling me that we were descended from the kings of Ireland, followed by

a rendition of 'The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls' and ended with a rousing chorus of the Irish rebel song, 'The Merry Plough Boy'. That's when I knew when to put him to bed." Sean's eyes began to tear. "But I adored him and loved listening to the Irish stories that he shared with me. I promised him that someday he and I would go to Ireland together to visit his old haunts in Dublin and the ancestral home of our ancestors in the Meath, Tara area."

"What about friends Sean? Did you have any friends growing up?"

"Not really. I was a bit of a loner, I guess. I spent a lot of time at the public library reading about science -and about Ireland, of course. When I enrolled in the University of Notre Dame, I made a few friends while there."

"What about girlfriends Sean. Have you ever had a girlfriend?"

"Not really. When growing up, young Catholic boys did not try to date young Catholic girls. While at the University of Notre Dame, I dated a few girls there. But by the time I got here to MIT, I was just too busy to date many girls and the ones that I did date just didn't appeal to me."

Dr. Weisman changed direction. "You told me before that you decided at the last minute to stop-over in Ireland on your way to present a scientific paper in Edinburgh, Scotland because your grandfather was born in Ireland. Correct?"

"Correct."

"And you told me that while there, you visited the historic site of Tara which your grandfather said was the ancestral home of the O'Neills. Correct?"

"Yes."

"And you said that while at Tara, you accidentally met a young Irish girl named Nualena and you fell in love with each other?"

"Yes."

"Tell me about Nualena."

"Well, when I got to Tara, I found that the tour-guide office was closed for the season and while wandering about the site on my own, I accidentally met an Irish girl named Nualena who seemed to know everything about Tara and my ancestors. We spent the next few evenings together while she was telling me everything about Tara and my Irish ancestors and, during that time, I found myself falling in love with her. She's the first woman that I have ever fallen in love with. I've never felt that way about a woman before but I finally got

enough nerve to tell her that I loved her and I was really surprised when she said that she loved me also. But she told me that her father had promised her in marriage to his landlord's son to pay off a debt that he owed the landlord. It was then that I promised that I would go back to the United States, get enough money to pay off her father's debts, return to Ireland and marry her. Since then, she comes to me every night in a dream and begs me to keep my promise."

"I see," said Dr. Weisman and then stopped for a moment to collect his thoughts. "I can understand the two of you falling in love with each other under those circumstances. But you say that when you went looking for her the last night and the next morning that you were there that you couldn't find her and that nobody had ever heard of her?"

"That's right!"

"And you say that she would be forced to marry her father's landlord's son if you didn't come up with the money that her father owed the landlord.?"

"That's what she said."

"Let me ask you a few more questions about Nualena. How old was she when you met her?"

"She said that she was twenty years old and that she was promised in marriage by her father to the landlord's son when she was twenty-one."

"What did she look like?" Sean described Nualena.

"Did she have any brothers or sisters."

"I don't think so. She never mentioned any."

"Did you ever meet her mother or father?"

"No. She mentioned her father promising her to his landlord's son, but she never mentioned her mother. I think that her mother was dead. I don't even know where Nualena lived.

"By the way, did anyone else ever see you with Nualena?"

"No. The guided tours were finished for the season and it was only in the evenings that I met her. We were always alone. Why do you ask?"

Dr. Weisman ignored Sean's question and stroking his chin in thought, said. “Well, I think that we have covered enough ground for today. Please see me tomorrow at the same time. In the meantime, I'd like you to have a physical examination.”

Dr. Weisman began. “Thanks for coming again, Sean. Please sit down.” Sean sat down. “Before I give you my opinion, let me remind you that psychiatry is not an exact science and all we psychiatrists can do is to try to use what little knowledge of how we think the mind works to try to diagnose why a person’s mind may not be functioning in a way that we consider to be normal – a normal mind being defined as one that functions acceptably well in its human environment. Most psychiatrists use the theories of a specific school of psychiatric thought to try to cure their patients of whatever appears to be wrong with them. Therefore, I should tell you that I am a psychiatrist who uses some of the psychoanalytical theories of Carl Jung’s to try to analyze people who suffer from some kind of emotional trauma and as a result will be using his theories which I will explain to you, as they apply to your case, as we go along. Having said that, let me give you my analysis for the possible reasons for your recent inability to function perhaps as well as you could.”

“Makes no difference to me doc. I guess one shrink is as good as another,” Sean said, trying to be funny. But he added in a more worried tone, “As long as you can help me.”

“Well, I should also tell you that Jung’s psychoanalytic theories are a little different than other psychoanalysts, such as Freud, so I will try to explain what I think are the causes of your problems using Jung’s metaphors.”

“Okay, shoot. What do I have to lose?”

“Well, to begin with, we have found absolutely nothing wrong with you physically, especially your brain. It shows no signs of any physical trauma, past or present.” Sean sighed with relief. “But I think that you have a slight case of neurosis.”

“You mean I’m psychotic?”

Dr. Weisman held up his hand to prevent Sean from going further. “Not at all,” he protested. “Let me explain. Psychosis is a major personality disorder which appears to result from a complex combination of genetic risk, differences in brain development, as well as exposure to stress or trauma. It can also lead to schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or severe depression. A person who is psychotic can be identified by a lack of empathy, and poor behavioural controls which result in persistent antisocial deviance and possible criminal behaviour. It can totally disrupt a person’s day-to-day functioning to the point where they become totally dysfunctional. You show none of those symptoms. Neurosis, on the other hand, is a mild mental

disorder that causes a sense of distress and an inability to function normally. People who suffer from neurosis show characteristics of anxiety, depression, or other feelings of unhappiness or distress that are out of proportion to a normal person's life – which you seem to be experiencing.”

Sean heaved a sigh of relief. “Then what is causing my neurosis and what's the cure, doc?”

“Well, the cure is to resolve any issues that might be interfering with your normal functioning.”

“Then what are the issues that might be interfering with my normal functioning?” Sean parroted.

“You know what they are, don't you Sean!”

Sean hung his head. “Yes.”

“What are they?”

“I seem to be obsessed with Nualena and feel guilty about not being able to help her.”

“Yes. And until we resolve that issue, I can't help you. But it's more than that, Sean. You are very, very deeply in love with Nualena as a result of the very powerful act of synchronicity that brought you two together.”

Chapter 11

“What the heck’s synchronicity?” asked Sean.

“Well, Carl Jung is the psychoanalyst who coined the term, and according to him, synchronicity occurs when two or more events occur very closely together in time and space and are significantly related but have no apparent common cause.”

Sean interjected. “Synchronicity sounds to me like it’s just another way of saying ‘coincidence’.”

“Not really, Sean. Let me give you an example of synchronicity. Carl Jung says he coined the phrase ‘synchronicity’ after he experienced a case in which he was treating a young woman who was relating to him a dream she had in which she was given a scarab beetle. While she was describing her dream, Jung heard a noise behind him and turned around to see an insect hitting against the closed window of the room as if trying to get inside. He opened the window and in flew an insect that belonged to the beetle family. I guess it could be argued that the beetle incident was just a once-in-a-lifetime coincidence, but I don’t think so, because he also records other examples of synchronicity from some of his other case studies.”

“Wow! That’s weird!”

“No weirder than the research that you are involved with, called ‘Quantum Entanglement’, or ‘Spooky Action at a Distance’ that you say is a phrase that Albert Einstein used to describe it,” Dr. Weisman countered and smiled.

“But that’s science,” Sean protested.

Dr. Weisman countered Sean’s response again. “Didn’t a famous scientist, I forget which one, say ‘Not only is the Universe stranger than we think, it is, but stranger than we can think?’”

“Yeah, that was Werner Heisenberg,” Sean confessed

“The last frontier is not space, Sean. It is the human mind,” Dr. Weisman stated a bit pompously.

“All that stuff about synchronicity may be true doctor, but what does that have to do with Nualena and me?”

“Well, synchronicity is like an equation. When one side of the potential synchronistic equation is very similar to the other side of the equation, then synchronicity occurs. Nualena is on one side of a synchronistic equation and you are on the other side. Let’s examine the equation. It would appear that both of you had no brothers or sisters; apparently neither of your fathers played much of a personal role in your lives as you grew up; your mothers were absent for a significant part of your lives; you both probably had few friends when growing up and finally, neither of you had ever been in love before and were subconsciously looking for love. Synchronicity also appears to happen more often to a person when they are in a heightened state of awareness or excitement in which you both were. When you went to Ireland you were already in a heightened sense of anticipating learning more about your Tara ancestors and Nualena was also in a heightened awareness of Tara because as a child she probably spent all her free time frequenting the ruins of Tara and perhaps fantasizing of someday meeting a ‘prince-charming’ “

“Well, Nualena certainly knew a lot about Tara and my ancestry. I can see how that could attract us to one another.”

“Did you ever wonder why Nualena knew so much about Tara and your ancestors, Sean?”

“Yes, but when I told her how impressed I was with her knowledge, and asked her why she knew so much, she said that, although she and her ancestors had always lived at Tara, she had never been a tourist-guide there and had never read about Tara or my ancestry. She said that she just knew what she knew. I attributed her apparent photographic memory to the fact that she must have heard or read about all this stuff when she was a small child and that it was buried in her subconscious memory and was only retrieved when she met me.”

“Well, you are partially correct, Sean, but it wasn’t her subconscious mind from which she retrieved all that information, but from her collective unconscious”.

Sean looked puzzled. “I’ve heard of the unconscious doctor. But what’s the ‘collective unconscious’?”

Dr. Weisman went into his lecture mode again. “Well, all psychoanalysts agree that the memory of a person can be thought of as consisting of two layers – the personal conscious and the personal unconscious. The ‘conscious mind’ coexists with the ‘unconscious mind’ and consists of the thoughts, memories, and emotions of which a person is aware and is largely responsible for feelings of identity.

The unconscious mind refers to all the information and experiences of an individual’s lifetime that have been forgotten or repressed but continue to influence their behaviour and attitudes on an unconscious level. It contains memories, perceptions, and thoughts that may not be consciously accessible but can potentially become conscious. But, according to Carl Jung,” (*Here we go again!* thought Sean) “there is a third kind of memory capable of being stored in the human brain. Jung calls this third kind of memory ‘the collective unconscious’ and believes that as the human species evolved over thousands of years, and because all human societies share the same cultural experiences relating to such things as birth, family, food-gathering, fear of the unknown, death, etcetera, these common cultural experiences, are initially stored as ‘engrams’ or units of memory in the conscious mind. Over time, these engrams eventually move from the personal conscious to the personal unconscious and finally to the collective unconscious. Again, over thousands of years, these engrams buried in the collective unconscious degrade to the point where engram information is no longer stored as specific experiences but rather as abstract events represented by universal symbols or ‘archetypes’ and are biologically inherited and expressed through the psyche. The ‘psyche’ is defined as the totality of thought, feeling, and motivation, which directs the body’s reactions to its social and physical environment and transects the conscious, unconscious and collective unconscious. When stimulated by a very strong external emotional event, the psyche can reveal archetypes which surface in consciousness in the form of dreams, visions, or feelings, and are expressed in our culture through such things as music, art, religion, myths, and symbolic rituals. According to Jung, some examples of these universal archetypes that exist in all human cultures include the Search, the Mother, the Hero, the Child, the Wise Old Man, the Trickster, and so on where each archetype represents common past human experiences.”

“Wait a minute!” interjected Sean. “Are you trying to tell me that memory can be inherited?”

Dr. Weisman held up his hand to prevent Sean from speaking further and exclaimed. “Yes, I am! According to Jung, and because the archetypes I just mentioned are inherited, when an individual is born, their mind already has innate instincts imprinted in it. Instinctive fear of the dark, or of snakes and spiders might be examples. And whether you realize it or not, you and Nualena share a particularly strong collective unconscious that is thousands of years old because both of your ancient ancestors were from Tara and were culturally associated with each other. I even suspect that at some time in the past, one of your male O’Neill ancestors may have fallen in love with one of Nualena’s female ancestors who was a hostage and rescued her by marrying her.”

Sean looked annoyed. “Are you finished?”

“Yes.”

“Well with all due respect to Carl Jung and to you, sir, I think that Carl Jung’s theory about the ‘collective unconscious’ is a lot of bullshit! Although, some of his ideas about the human mind, such as the ego and the psyche may be close to the truth, please explain to me how in the hell memory can be inherited!”

Doctor Weisman smiled indulgently and replied calmly, “Yes, I can understand why you feel that way, Sean. I know I did when I first read about Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious while getting my degree in psychiatry. But after further research into his idea, I have become convinced that memory of some, if not all, organisms can be inherited.”

Sean challenged him. “Prove it!”

“Okay. Have you ever owned a dog?”

“Yes, but he died of old age when I was seventeen. So what?”

“I’ll bet you a thousand dollars that when your dog was alive that it always went around in circles and scratched at its blanket before lying down to go to sleep.”

“Well, yes...So what?”

“Why did your dog do that?”

“It learned that behaviour from one of its parents when it was a pup!”

“That’s a possibility. So let me give you another example. Take the cuckoo

bird. A female cuckoo bird lays her egg in a different species bird's nest, say a robin. The robin unwittingly hatches the cuckoo bird's egg along with its own. When the fledgling cuckoo bird gets big enough, it pushes the baby robins out of the nest and is then unwittingly raised to maturity by the female robin. Upon maturity, the cuckoo bird flies away and repeats the same process as had its real mother. Why does it repeat the same process as its mother if it was not taught to do so by her? Remember, the baby cuckoo never meets its mother."

Sean scratched his chin in thought. "I don't know. Instinct I guess."

"Where did the cuckoo's instinct come from?"

"It's born with it."

"Why is it born with it?"

"I know don't," Sean admitted.

"It is born with it because it, and probably every other living organism is born with what you call 'instinct' because it inherits what Carl Jung called a 'collective unconscious' from its ancestors. And there have been all kinds of experiments performed with mice and even flatworms which indicate that learning can be inherited."

"Wait a minute, doc! If that's true, doctor, then how can this information be transferred from one generation of humans to the next generation when the only way that it could be done is genetically through the transfer of DNA? And I don't think that you can change the DNA of a living organism to transfer memory data."

"That's not entirely correct, Sean. While it is true that the combined 'genome' or genetic code of the offspring of two organisms is transferred intact, very recent research seems to indicate that there also exists within the cells containing the resultant combined genome, during meiosis, a chemical structure called the 'epigenome' that marks the genome in a way that tells genes in the genome what to do, where to do it, and when to do it. Different cells have different epigenetic marks. These epigenetic marks, which are not part of the DNA itself, unlike genes, can change and be transferred to an organism's offspring through epigenetic inheritance."

Overwhelmed by Dr. Weisman's apparent knowledge, Sean finally surrendered. "I guess all that stuff is too deep for me," he confessed. "But, again, what's all got to do with Nualena and me.?"

"Because you and Nualena have inherited so much of the same collective

unconscious, a large part of your and her psyche are similar, and complement each other. The result is that both of you felt attracted psychically to each other the first time that you met. Your inability to psychologically unite with her since then has led to your neurosis.”

“If everything that you say is true, Doctor Weisman then what’s the solution?”

“In my opinion the only cure for your neurosis is to find Nualena and complete your common identity through the union of your psyches, by a physical union, such as marriage.”

“I think I see what you mean. Thanks for telling me all this. Whether any of what you have told is true or not I don't know. But as far as I'm concerned, the only solution to my problems is to go back to Ireland immediately, money or no money, find Nualena and resolve this issue with her, once and for all!”

Doctor Weisman coughed nervously. “There is one more thing that I need to tell you Sean.”

“What's that,” Sean asked as he got up to leave.

Doctor Weisman coughed nervously again and said, “Remember, I told you that I am a Jungian psychoanalyst and I’m just trying to diagnose the emotional problems that you are having using Jungian theory. As a result, I must explore every possible reason for your mental state.”

“Okay! okay!” replied Sean impatiently. He could hardly wait to get out of Dr. Weisman’s office so that he could go to Nualena. “What is it that you want to tell me.”?

“Nualena may or may not be real.”

Chapter 13

“What?” Sean wasn't sure of what he just heard. He repeated himself.

“What?”

“I said that Nualena may or may not be real.”

“You mean that she's a figment of my imagination? Jesus Christ! So now, you're telling me that I'm schizophrenic,” Sean said sarcastically.

Doctor Weisman began to get angry. “I didn't say that! I've already told you that in my opinion, you are not schizophrenic. But other than a bit of neurosis, there may be another explanation for Nualena's so-called existence.”

“Well, if I think that Nualena is real and she's not real and if I don't have schizophrenia, then what the hell do I have?” Sean demanded to know.

“Well, although schizophrenia is a serious mental disorder in which the person afflicted with it interprets reality abnormally, usually resulting in a combination of hallucinations, delusions, and extremely disordered thinking and behaviour that impairs daily functioning and can be completely disabling and require lifelong treatment, I have seen no signs of schizophrenia in you - yet! But as I said, Nualena might not be real!”

“Then come on, doc! Of course Nualena’s real. I met her in the flesh, I spoke to her and she spoke to me. She’s the one that told me everything about Tara.” Sean blushed. “I even held her in my arms, kissed her and told her that I loved her. She loves me and I love her. Are you telling me that I imagined all that?”

“Not exactly, Nualena might be a figment of your imagination in which case you are probably suffering from schizophrenia. But frankly, I doubt that because, as I said, you do not have any of the symptoms of schizophrenia. But she could be a 'catalytic exteriorization' of your psyche.”

“What the hell's that?” Sean demanded to know.

“Well, Carl Jung, again mentions in his memoirs that once, during a heated argument with fellow psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud about the supernatural, that he, Jung, became emotionally upset and at that moment there was a loud noise in the bookcase which was near to where they were sitting. When a startled Freud looked at him inquisitively, Jung explained to Freud that he believed that the noise was an example of ‘a catalytic exteriorization phenomenon’ or the physical manifestation of the psyche. Freud responded that Jung’s explanation was “sheer bosh” to which Jung replied that Freud was wrong and to prove his point, he predicted that in a moment there would be another such loud noise upon which the same loud noise was repeated in the same bookcase. Jung says that Freud’s reaction was to stare at him wordlessly in disbelief and Jung asserts that he, himself, was dumbfounded by the certainty with which he predicted the second occurrence of the noise.”

“So? It could have been a coincidence.”

“Yes. Or, according to Jung’s theory of the exteriorization of the psyche and based on everything that you’ve told me so far, about all your Irish-related experiences, your psyche could have become so overstimulated by your anticipated visit to Tara that it triggered an actual physical manifestation of an archetype from within your collective unconscious. The archetype that you could have stimulated might have been that of the ‘Lover’ and was physically manifested as Nualena.”

Sean refrained from blurting out again “This is bullshit!” but instead looked skeptically at Dr. Weisman, and this time said politely. “No offence doctor, but frankly, I find all this stuff pretty hard to believe.”

“Of course it is, Sean. But no one ever said that our understanding of the way in which the human mind works is an exact science. All we psychoanalysts can do is to try to explain the human mind using metaphors that we understand. But there are a lot of strange physical phenomena that have happened to people that has yet to be explained.”

Sean challenged him for the second time. “Such as?”

Doctor Weisman rhymed off a litany of unexplained recorded historical physical phenomena: “Lourdes, Fatima, faith-healing, stigmata, ghosts, etcetera.”

“Yes,” Sean confessed. “I’ve heard or read about most of these occurrences. But the things that you just mentioned probably happened as a result of religious superstition or mass hysteria, with perhaps the exception of cases of stigmata,” he conceded. “But even in those cases the wounds may have been self-inflicted,” he added defensively. “And why do we not hear of occurrences of these kinds of phenomena as much anymore?” he ended smugly.

“But we do, Sean. Only now, under the right emotional circumstances, the exteriorization of our psyche now manifests itself physically in more modern ways, such as in the case of flying-saucers.”

Sean said indignantly. “You really don’t believe all that nonsense about flying saucers, do you?”

“I’m not saying that I do and I’m not saying that I don’t Sean. What I’m saying is, I believe, that under certain circumstances, the human psyche may, and I emphasize the word ‘may’, have the ability to actually create the appearance of matter. We don’t know how yet, but there has been a phenomenal number of weird events recorded in history which leads one to believe that something supernatural occurs from time to time. For example, a lot of people have sworn that they have seen flying saucers and even had personal contact with them. Granted, some of the sightings of them may have been mistaken such as when in 1947 a Kenneth Arnold first coined the phrase ‘flying saucers’ when he said that he saw a formation of saucer-like objects flying in a vee shaped formation over Mount Rainier. There is a strong possibility that these objects were just a flock of birds flying in a vee formation with the sun being reflected off their white breasts. And it is obvious that some purported encounters with flying saucers by people like George Adamski in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s were probably outright fakes. And it can be argued that Barney and Betty Hill’s temporary abduction by aliens near Lancaster, New Hampshire in 1961 could have been a case of a dual hallucination – although it is unlikely that two otherwise normal people would have the same hallucination at the same time. But having said all that, it’s pretty difficult to dismiss a passage from the book of Ezekiel in the Bible in which Ezekiel describes seeing in the sky an object that looked like ‘a wheel within a wheel’ and out of the wheels emerging the likeness of four living creatures who looked like human beings, which is very interesting, considering that the event happened about 625 BCE, long before man even conceived of airplanes. If you’ve never read that chapter in the Bible, then I urge you to read it. I suggest that Ezekiel’s encounter with what could be interpreted as a ‘flying saucer’ and aliens was real to him and that it was a psychic manifestation of an archetype stored in his collective unconscious. You might also want to research the topic ‘vimanas’ mentioned in East-Indian literature.”

“This is the first time that I’ve heard about all of the stuff that you just told me doctor and I’m sure that, as a psychoanalyst, you probably know what you are talking about. But, in spite of everything you’ve told me, I still believe that Nualena is real. But tell me, if what you tell me is true, how would I be able to tell whether Nualena is real or not?”

“Well, Sean, there are two possibilities – either Nualena is real or she is not real. If Nualena is real, then she may be psychic and was sharing her collective unconscious with yours in which case the solution is very simple. It’s just a matter of finding her. And you will know that Nualena is real when someone else sees you with her.”

Sean abruptly rose from his chair.

“Where are you going?” Dr. Weisman demanded to know.

“I’m going to find Nualena.”

Epilogue

It was evening. Sean sat on the 'Mound of the Hostages', a silver lyre brooch clutched tightly in his hand.